

Love Is in the Air on Catalina Island
Catalina Island Conservancy and IWS Bald Eagle Restoration Program Thriving
Millions Visit Eagle Cams to Get a Bird's Eye View of the Recovery of the Nation's Symbol

AVALON, Calif., March 18, 2014 - Love is in the air on Catalina Island, with the bald eagles that had disappeared from the Island for more than two decades continuing their successful recovery during this year's mating season.

Two eaglets hatched in the Seal Rocks nest at the far eastern end of the Island on Sunday or Monday, continuing the legacy of the national icon's successful return to breeding on Catalina.

At least four more of the eight pairs of these large birds of prey on the Island are preparing for the hatching of chicks, thanks to a 34-year recovery effort by the Catalina Island Conservancy and Institute for Wildlife Studies (IWS). To see two of the sets of parents, join the millions who have visited IWS' two eagle cams set up on the Island and streaming [online](#).

"Seeing the bald eagles soaring over Catalina's cliffs is another visible sign of the important partnerships that help the Catalina Island Conservancy fulfill its mission of protecting and restoring the Island's invaluable natural, cultural and recreational assets," said Ann M. Muscat, Ph.D., Conservancy president and CEO. "The restoration of the bald eagle population on Catalina Island is one of the great conservation success stories, and it demonstrates how much can be accomplished when we work together to maximize our resources."

After two decades without an eagle sighting on Catalina Island, the Conservancy initially funded the Bald Eagle Restoration Program in 1980. As additional funding became available, the IWS took over the program and manages it today with the Conservancy's support.

The IWS, with the help of the Conservancy, reintroduced the eagles to the California Channel Islands at Catalina after DDT poisoning had decimated the big birds. The pesticide was outlawed in 1972 but continued to be in the environment. It caused the eagles to lay eggs with weak shells that cracked under the adults' weight during incubation.

Initially, biologists removed the eagles' eggs from the nests, incubated them elsewhere and then returned the chicks to the nests. As the DDT in environment abated, the eagles were able to incubate their own eggs.

Based on past experience, Peter Sharpe, Ph.D., the IWS biologist who oversees the Bald Eagle Restoration Program on Catalina, said the three remaining eagle pairs could produce additional eggs before the mating season ends. Last year, 11 eggs hatched, and nine eggs hatched the year before.

"Catalina's bald eagles have reached a self-sustaining population," Sharpe said. "Some of the ones born on the Island stay on the Island or return when they're ready to breed. We have four new birds on the Island this year, so we are very optimistic about the future of eagles on Catalina Island."

Biologists have documented some important new developments among the eagles visible on the eagle cams. In the Two Harbors nest, viewers can see an egg laid in mid-February by K-82, a female eagle hatched in 1998 and fostered at another nest on the Island. Her mate is K-81, a male eagle hatched in 1998 at the San Francisco Zoo and brought to Catalina as part of the recovery. The pair produced two eggs, but one broke.

In the West End nest, viewers can see K-01, a male eagle also known as Superman, who was hatched in 2000 in the San Francisco Zoo and brought to Catalina. K-01 lost his original mate, Wray, around the end of last year. But he's been recently seen in the company of K-87, a much younger female. K-87 hatched in 2009 in the Two Harbors nest. She was the first chick to hatch naturally in that nest. Biologists have seen the pair copulating but no egg so far.

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PHOTO & CAPTION



A Catalina eagle swoops in to catch its prey. Photo by Michele Kogler. Courtesy Catalina Island Conservancy.

About the Catalina Island Conservancy

The Catalina Island Conservancy was formed in 1972 and is one of California's oldest land trusts. Its mission is to be a responsible steward of its lands through a balance of conservation, education and recreation. The Conservancy protects the magnificent natural and cultural heritage of Santa Catalina Island, stewarding approximately 42,000 acres of land deeded to the Conservancy in 1975, 62 miles of rugged shoreline and more than 80 miles of trails. It operates the Airport in the Sky, Wrigley Memorial & Botanic Garden and two nature centers. Twenty miles from the mainland, the Island is home to more than 60 plant and animal species found nowhere else in the world. For additional information, visit www.catalinaconservancy.org.